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SUBJECT: UNMIS HEAD TO S/E NATSIOS: SPLM MUST EMPOWER ITSELF

REF: A. KHARTOUM 01557

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 01569

[1](#)C. KHARTOUM 01563

Summary

[1](#)1. (SBU) The SPLM must develop strategies that empower the party within the Government of National Unity over the next three years or risk irrelevance, UNMIS head Taye Brooke-Zerihoun told S/E Natsios. Support for the SPLM is "wide and deep" in Northern Sudan and the movement must "flex its muscles" on national issues to exploit the weaknesses of the NCP. Instead of stumbling toward elections in political stasis or pursuing a course of action that could result in a unilateral declaration of independence for Southern Sudan, Taye said that the UN was encouraging the SPLM to look forward in their own self-interest rather than "complaining to the international community" that CPA implementation has stalled. S/E Natsios said that there had been improvements in Southern Sudan since the signing of the CPA, even if development was slow. He described a proposal for enhancing CPA implementation that he had broached with both SPLM and NCP officials and warned of "centrifugal forces" that were pulling Sudan apart. Referring to the upcoming Darfur peace negotiations set to begin in Libya, Taye said that an agreement could be reached quickly with the combination of a single UN/AU mediator, proper sequencing, and the "right mix of participants." Within hours of the meeting, the UN Envoy for Darfur appointed Taye as the UN mediator for the talks. End summary.

SPLM Needs Three-Year Strategy

[1](#)2. (SBU) The UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) is pressing the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) to develop strategies for the next three years, UN Acting Special Representative of the Secretary General Taye Brooke-Zerihoun told S/E Natsios on October 5. Support for the SPLM in the North is "wide and deep," according to Taye, who said that the National Congress Party (NCP) needs the SPLM to survive given the strict competition among the Northern political parties. However, the SPLM cannot continue to deal with the NCP in a "static manner" and just "complain" to the international community, including the UN and the U.S., when implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) stalls. The SPLM has not taken full advantage of the real

opportunities the CPA provides it on the national stage. The SPLM should develop policies to empower itself within the Sudanese Government--"with the UN's help," said Taye. "They're either in or out of the Government of National Unity (GNU)," said Taye. He noted that "there was an abundance of self-righteousness within the SPLM, which was common to liberation movements."

"Flexing Muscles"

13. (SBU) Taye called for the SPLM to "flex its muscles" on national issues. He criticized the SPLM for its complacency during cabinet meetings, saying that "they have half of the cabinet posts, regardless of whether (SPLM turncoat) Lam Akol holds the Foreign Ministry." Taye was confident the SPLM could gain concessions from the NCP through a sophisticated political strategy because of the fundamental inequality in the relationship: While the NCP "never said anything about Southern issues" (the NCP has essentially "written off" most of the South, except for the oil areas), the SPLM was well-placed to intervene in political decisions affecting the North. By underscoring with the NCP, which Taye characterized as "threatened," that it needed the SPLM, the SPLM could exchange political engagement for policies that would make North/South unity attractive.

Declaration of Independence?

14. (SBU) UNMIS had developed three scenarios to anticipate the period leading up to and including the elections scheduled for 2009: 1) A smooth transition, with minor

KHARTOUM 00001581 002 OF 002

"hiccups," to elections that are accepted by both parties, 2) Continuation of the "status quo" beyond 2011, which would fail to transform the political dynamic in Sudan, and 3) Southern Sudan using the 2009 elections to make a unilateral declaration of independence in violation of the CPA. Taye inferred that growing support in Southern Sudan for the third option was naive. The Government of Southern Sudan was dependent on the oil revenues generated through refineries and pipelines located in the North. "The SPLM can't walk away from the NCP," said Taye, underscoring that the SPLM had never disputed reports in August that it had received 153 million in oil revenues. "The 1.2 billion dollar budget for the Government of Southern Sudan is better than Ethiopia's," he said, referring to his home country.

Improvement if Not Development

15. (SBU) S/E Natsios characterized as inaccurate SPLM claims that there was no peace dividend following the CPA. He reported that Blue Nile State Governor Malik Agar was "somber and brooding," alleging that since the South had gained nothing after the war it would lose nothing if it returned to conflict. Few post-conflict countries had access to the funds that the Government of Southern Sudan now possessed, said S/E Natsios, and while there may not be widespread development, improvement was evident throughout the South compared to his first visit to the region 18 years ago. "There is no starvation or war for one thing," said S/E Natsios.

Enhancing the CPA

16. (SBU) However, the international community needs to take action to get the CPA back on track, according S/E Natsios. He reported on his recent discussions with Assistant to the

President Nafie Ali Nafie and State Minister of Foreign Affairs Samani Al Wasila, during which he presented a proposal for enhancing CPA implementation (Refs. A and B). Both Nafie and Wasila agreed that trust between the NCP and the SPLM had broken down but blamed the situation on the SPLM. Referencing the possible secession of Southern Sudan, Nafie made an analogy to a cancer that should be excised. S/E Natsios expressed concern about the "acceleration of centrifugal forces that could pull Sudan apart" as violence simmered in Eastern Sudan and the Nubian areas while conflict endured in Darfur.

17. (SBU) Taye recalled a conversation he had with the archbishop of Khartoum during a visit to Sudan in the 1990s. The Archbishop said that three groups make up the social fabric in Sudan: 1) Arab Muslims, 2) African non-muslims, and 3) African Muslims. The tendency in Sudan was for the first two groups to pull the country apart, but according to the Archbishop, the third group kept the other two tied together. The NCP recognized this conundrum, which explained its fear of losing Darfur and other "non-Arab" Muslim areas such as Nubia, Blue Nile, and the East.

One Darfur Negotiator Equal Quick, Credible Process

18. (SBU) According to Taye, success or failure in the Darfur peace process hinges on the skill of the negotiator, adding that the talks scheduled to begin in Libya at the end of October would lose credibility without a single mediator. With the "the right mix of participants" and the correct sequencing, Taye predicted that there could be a quick agreement. Hold-out rebel leader Abdulwahid al Nur would be challenged by a credible process followed by a robust public affairs campaign that was absent after the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). (Note: Per Ref. C, Taye was subsequently selected to serve as the UN mediator for the Libya talks after Russia had objected to the selection of UN SRSG for Georgia Jean Arnault. End note.)

18. (U) S/E Natsios did not have the opportunity to clear this message prior to departure.
FERNANDEZ